also used this name in his Checklist of Ethiopian Muscicapidae (Sylviinae) (1960, *Occ. Pap. Nat. Mus. So. Rhod.*, 24B, p. 413), but suggested that *niloticus* might prove to be the same as *ansorgei* of northern Angola. In 1962 (*Publ. Cult. Co. Diam. Ang.*, Lisboa, 58, p. 86) I was able to compare the type of *ansorgei* with two birds from Kabompo, western Zambia. These latter proved to be *ansorgei*, but with no material from eastern Zambia it was not possible to decide whether two races were present in that country, or whether *niloticus* was a synonym of *ansorgei*. In order to resolve this problem, I have borrowed specimens from East Africa, the eastern Congo, Zambia and Angola (including the type of *ansorgei*) so that direct comparisons of all populations could be made. For their kindness in lending these specimens I would like to thank Dean Amadon of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, and M. P. Stuart Irwin of the National Museum of Rhodesia, Bulawayo. I would also like to thank Con Benson for stimulating my interest and arranging the loans.

When specimens from Uganda, western Kenya, Zambia, Ngamiland and Angola are compared, they are found to belong to a single taxon for which *ansorgei* is the earliest name. Compared to nominate *rufescens*, *ansorgei* is larger and darker; wings of *rufescens* males measure 72–78, while those of *ansorgei* measure 77–82. The type of *ansorgei* is somewhat browner than recent specimens from Zambia, but it is over 60 years old, and this difference is most probably due to foxing. The range of *ansorgei* is the southern Sudan, Uganda, adjoining Congo, and extreme western Kenya; Zambia and Ngamiland; and north-west Angola in Malange and southern Cuanza Norte. A closely related and poorly marked race, *foxi*, is found in the highlands of south-west Uganda and Kivu. It is distinguished from *ansorgei* only on greater size, wing 80–85, and may not actually be recognizable.

Specimens from the west slopes of Ruwenzori and from the Ituri and upper Uelle are somewhat paler than normal *ansorgei*, and in this character, but not in size, show the influence of the West African *rufescens*. The latter ranges from southern Nigeria west to the central northern Congo and south to the Congo mouth and northern Cuanza Norte in Angola. An even paler small form, *chadensis*, is recorded from Lake Chad, and to round out the range of the species, Morel and Roux (1962, *Oiseau*, p. 49) record an isolated population from Richard Toll on the lower Senegal River. Their specimens of the latter were not adequate for subspecific determination.

On the "creaminess" in the plumage of *Ducula bicolor* (Scopoli)

by Humayun Abdulali

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The Pied Imperial Pigeon *Ducula bicolor* (Scopoli) ranges from the Andaman Islands in the Indo-Malayan region to New Guinea and Australia. It was noticed long ago that many portions of its plumage were

creamy-white rather than white, and Stuart Baker (1928, *Fauna of British India, Birds*, 5: 211) noted that the creamy tinge varied greatly between individuals and faded rapidly in skins. It was generally accepted that this colour, often of a patchy nature and usually most prominent on the forehead and on the shoulders, was due to stains from nutmeg (*Myristica* sp.) and other fruits on which the birds fed. Robinson & Chasen (1936, *The Birds of the Malay Peninsula*, 3: 55) agreed with this view but drew attention to the fact that this "staining" was most noticeable in moulting birds.

In the course of the examination of a few specimens which I recently obtained in the Nicobar Islands, I noticed that the feathers around the rump had yellow bases which could only be seen by parting the feathers. With reference to the observation of Robinson & Chasen cited above, I should note that in this area newly developing feathers, while enclosed in quill, were yellowish with the intensity of the colour increasing towards the base. As the tip emerged from the sheath, it was white but showed bright yellow in the portions still enclosed. As the feather developed, the distal portion continued to lose colour, until only the shielded bases remained yellow. If pulled out, the portions ordinarily embedded in the skin showed a brighter colour, which may be termed "butter-yellow", as has been done by Robinson & Chasen (*loc. cit.*)

The creamy colour in the plumage of the pigeon is most constant on the forehead and in roughly symmetrical patches on the shoulders. As far as I could judge from a cursory examination of the larger series in the British Museum, this colour only occurred on such parts as could be reached by the forehead. I found on breaking the sheath that the colour at the base of the feather could be transferred on to paper by rubbing, and I would therefore suggest that this colour is first acquired on the forehead from the growing feathers on the rump and then transferred to the shoulders and other parts of the plumage in the process of preening.

On the South African races of the Crested Francolin, with special reference to *Francolinus sephaena zambesiae* Mackworth-Praed, 1920

by P. A. Clancey

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When originally described, *Francolinus sephaena zambesiae* Mackworth-Praed, 1920: Mesanangue, 70 miles above Tete, Zambesi R., Moçambique, was stated to be smaller than the nominate race and to be rather paler, and its range was given as the Zambesi R. valley. Small size when compared with the nominate race of *F. sephaena* (Smith), 1836: Marico and Limpopo Rivers, western Transvaal, is a characteristic of all the south-east African littoral populations of the Crested Francolin as far south as Zululand, where the populations are actually darker and richer coloured and not paler than the xeric *F. s. sephaena*. Roberts (1940 and earlier,